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ABSTRACT

These keynote remarks review some of the origins of Title XII of the Foreign Assistance Act. This legislation, whose goal is to conquer famine and malnutrition worldwide, was signed into law by President Ford in 1975. Senator Hubert Humphrey's address at the 1977 Famine Prevention Symposium in Washington, DC, is recounted with emphasis on his challenge to the participating diplomats, university leaders, and AID officials to banish the age-old problem of famine and malnutrition worldwide through farmer and land-grant education programs in developing countries. Two books which inspired the legislative process that culminated in Title XII are also reviewed. The first, "We Don't Know How" (William Paddock), exposes the failures of AID projects in Mexico and Central America and argues that two major factors in these failures were a breakdown in communications among the project sponsors and the lack of institutional memory. The second, "Partners with India" (Hadley Read), suggests that U.S. land-grant models should be applied in countries that need to improve agricultural production. Attention is also drawn in these remarks to the preliminary results of a survey of the policies of 40 Title XII institutions for the storage and retrieval of development assistance information. It is noted that some U.S. institutions that have had long experience with development contracts have done little to retain and catalog the information resulting from these contracts, or to promote information retrieval by students, teachers, scientists, and other institutions. Librarians are urged to provide leadership in the storage and dissemination of research information on famine and malnutrition to support efforts to overcome these problems in needy countries. (MAB)

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LIBRARIES AND DEVELOPMENT Remarks by Paul Findley

prepared for Oregon State University, Corvallis, April 1991

On my office wall is a photograph taken in December 1977. It shows an ailing Senator Hubert Humphrey, together with former President Gerald R. Ford and myself. It was taken at the conclusion of the Famine Prevention Symposium that had just been completed in a Senate office building in Washington, D.C.

It is a souvenir of congressional days that I prize highly, symbolizing both a remarkable human being and a worthy cause.

Earlier that morning, Senator Humphrey had literally pulled himself out of the sick bed--it proved to be his death bed-- in order to address a prestigious gathering. In the audience were the senior officials of the Agency for International Development, diplomats from seventy-five nations, presidents of several U.S. land-grant universities, and members of the newly-formed Board for International Food and Agricultural Development, then chaired by Dr. Clifton Wharton, chancellor of the state universities of New York.

Former President Ford was there because he had signed Title XII of the Foreign Assistance Act into law in 1975. Vice-President Walter Mondale brought a personal message from President Carter.

Senator Humphrey and I were there because we had co-sponsored of Title XII. Most legislation is drafted in the

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executive branch, and then presented to key congressmen for introduction into the legislative mill. Not Title XII. It was truly a product of Capitol Hill. We had put the ideas and words together--and then persuaded our colleagues to enact it. For the most part, the executive branch was a by-stander. The exceptions were Dr. Don Paarlberg of Purdue University, who remains today a key member of the land-grant university community, and Dan Parker, a leading industrialist who then headed the Agency for International Development.

It was an exciting moment. Although thin, haggard and dying, Senator Humphrey pulled himself erect and gained strength as he proceeded with his call. He spoke for forty minutes.

He challenged the diplomats, university leaders and AID officials to banish the age-old problem of famine and malnutrition worldwide. He was confident that they could meet the challenge and accomplish it within this century simply by marshalling the unique and enormous resources of the American land-grant system of education.

He knew that farmer-education was non-existent in most developing countries. And he also knew that the U.S. model of land-grant education, so eminently productive on this continent, could be adapted successfully in each needy country if-- a big if-- if both the host government and United States institutions would make a longterm commitment to work cooperatively toward that goal.

That day, Senator Humphrey was the Jonathan Baldwin Turner of his generation. Like the celebrated father of the land-grant system of yesterday, he expressed an exciting vision for today and tomorrow and challenged his audience to bring it into reality.

He declared the need for the continuing education of the masses of the farmers worldwide. Like Professor Turner 150 years earlier, he saw farmer education as an imperative.

Just as Turner had called for the modernization of an American agricultural economy that was far behind the times--lagging behind Europe, for example--Humphrey spoke out in 1977 for the modernization of a third-world agriculture that lags seriously behind industrialized nations. Now as then, the answer would be found in mass education of farmers.

Humphrey, the modern-day Jonathan Baldin Turner, knew the United States, despite its great abundance and humanitarian instincts, could not possibly meet the food needs of the world's burgeoning population. But he knew the United States has a unique resource which could help local farmers in the hungry nations meet local food needs.

The best contribution the United States could make to the challenge of world hunger, he deeply believed, was the U.S. model of land-grant education. Organized, sustained instruction in the field, in the classroom and through demonstration research would solve the problem.

And the United States land-grant educational institutions that have helped the American farmer yield such miracles for more than a century know exactly how to help the hungry nations meet their own local food needs. They know what to do and how to do it. This was the Humphrey message.

When his remarks ended, Senator Humphrey, ridden with cancer, was too weary to step down from the dias and greet those in the audience. Exhausted, he slumped into a chair and greeted members of the audience from a seated position.

Title XII actually had its origin four years before the seminar addressed by Senator Humphrey.

Two books-- I am sure I am not showing poor taste in mentioning books to this group-- two books actually inspired the legislative process that culminated in Title XII.

The first is an expose. Clearly an expose. It is entitled, We Don't Know How, written by William Paddock and published by Iowa State University Press in 1973. The book examines AID-type projects in Mexico and Central America. Paddock visited the sites of 50 projects in that region that leaders of AID, Peace Corps, and the Inter-American Development Bank had cited as their greatest successes.

Bear in mind that Paddock did not choose the sites himself. He visited only the places identified by the sponsors as the greatest successes.

On close examination, for the most part, they were not successes at all. Many of the sites had grown up in weeds. Local citizens had no memory of the projects at all.

Not one of the shining examples of success proved to be a success at all. The successes were actually failures, but the central sponsors did not know that awful truth. Because of a breakdown in communications and the lack of institutional memory, they did not know the facts.

Emerging from the book were these lessons:

1. Development projects were not long enough. Almost all were shortterm, typically only two years. Not long enough to achieve success.

2. Institutional memory was almost non-existent. Neither the host government, the local cooperators, or the U.S. sponsoring institutions had established a system for continuity or even memory.

Wasteful reinventing of the wheel became commonplace.

Dr. E. T. York, former chairman of BIFAD, remembers returning to an African country several years ago and finding under way there exactly the same research project underway that had been completed in the same institution five years before. Once completed, the earlier project disappeared without a trace.

On reading the Paddock book, I was horrified. As a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, I wanted foreign assistance to be successful. Even after making allowance for

the possibility that the Paddock book overstated the problems, I could not escape the feeling that much of our investment in foreign aid was a complete waste.

Then, just as suddenly, another book surfaced, Partners with India, by Hadley Read, published by the University of Illinois. I had no sooner finished reading the Paddock book than Read brought me the galley proofs of Partners With India. It recounted the experience of six U.S. land-grant universities helping to found in India during the nineteen fifties nine brand-new agricultural teaching institutions.

Hadley brightened my landscape. His book showed a way to overcome the basic shortcomings cited by Paddock: the shortterm character of development contracts, and the lack of continuity and institutional memory.

More precisely--and importantly--it offered a vision. To me, it suggested applying the genius of the U.S. land-grant model in countries that need to improve agricultural production.

These two books inspired the Title XII legislation. You should have both in your libraries. You will not enjoy reading the Paddock book, but you should read it anyway. You may hate it. It will make you rethink some long-held notions. You will love the Read book.

And so Title XII came into being.

In sixteen years, it has made progress. But not nearly enough. In some ways, we are falling behind, not moving ahead.

Senator Humphrey was confident that famine and malnutrition would be conquered by the end of the 20th century. Only nine years remain.

And the grim reaper's scythe is sharper than ever. The awful agony among the Kurds--starvation before our eyes in full color each evening on the network television news--is but a tiny part of the death toll.

The United Nations estimates that 35,000 people die worldwide each day from famine, malnutrition and disease. Thirty-five thousand people each 24 hours. The population of Corvallis is about forty-one thousand. Imagine all the people in Corvallis dying in a single day, and then tomorrow the extinction of another Corvallis, and another and another-- on and on.

From that sad statistic I must conclude that BIFAD--now called BIFADEC--and the Title XII community have not yet measured up to their opportunity--and responsibility.

More people are dying of famine every day than when Title XII came into being 16 years ago. We--you and I--are not doing our job well enough. We simply must do better.

Let me mention one of the dreams Senator Humphrey and I had about Title XII. We hoped U.S. universities would become specialists. One would acquire special competence in a relationship with Peru, for example. Its course structure would include classes in Peruvian history, culture, as well as language. Its relationship with Peru would continue

indefinitely into the future, and become so mutually beneficial that both countries would take pride in the relationship and memorialize it ways the public could see.

The U.S. university would have a room or a section and, eventually, perhaps a building marked as the Peruvian extension. And in Peru public markers would display proudly the relationship with the U.S. university.

And libraries in both the host institution and the U.S. would maintain carefully documents elaborating this relationship. The record of this cooperative relationship would be a rich mine of inspiration for students, teachers, agribusiness leaders, political leaders and those officials who design plans for the future.

And not just Peru. We could see the day when every developing nation would have longterm productive links with at each one major U.S. teaching institution.

We dreamed of the day when the mounting data from research and development projects in these countries would be carefully catalogued and retained for worldwide benefit. Students, teachers, scientists worldwide could, through computer retreival, benefit endlessly from the experience of yesterday.

Perhaps, through that process, researchers could quit re-inventing the wheel. Perhaps, through this economy, the process of research for the improvement of food production would be accelerated.

I will be even more specific. Several years ago I learned that some U.S. institutions that have had long experience with development contracts have done little to retain and catalog the information resulting from these contracts, and to promote retreival of this information by students, teachers, scientists and other institutions.

As a member of BIFAD, I suggested a survey of Title XII institutions to determine what policies then existed in regard to the storage and retreival of development assistance information.

Forty institutions were surveyed by telephone. Together, they handled 90 percent of Title XII business with AID.

You will be interested in the preliminary results.

Most of the institutions retain project documents and records in the original. Only a few make use of microfilming or computer taping.

In the majority of institutions, retrieval is not systematized.

Barely a majority make use of documents and records in the design and planning of new proposals and projects. Few use them in staffing new projects. Still fewer use them in implementing new projects, except, occasionally, to provide country-specific orientation to faculty and staff members going overseas.

Old documents and records are used infrequently for teaching purposes and research. According to Dr. William Miner of the BIFAD staff, who conducted the survey, most of the respondents "had to reach" to find an example, if any. It was clear, he found, that such uses were not routine and probably rare occurrences.

Several of the respondents commented on the lack of money to digest and mine this material, not only to "cap" a project appropriately but to advance the state of the art.

A few institutions kept documents in special libraries and documentation centers on campus. For example, Kansas State University has developed a third world documentation center.

At the University of Florida, project documents are compiled and indexed when the project has been completed. At Washington State University detailed reports on completed projects, intended as reference works, are routinely prepared. A seven-year project in Lesotho, for example, accounted for voluminous records.

Twenty-nine of the institutions said they keep documents indefinitely. But there was no suggestion that the retention was in a useful form. Six keep them for one to five years. Four then discard them. Two store them.

Nine institutions said there is no policy regarding the retention of project materials.

Several have used Title XII grants to get project files in order. This includes a range of activities: establishing records maintenance and retention sys;tems, centralizing rentention operations, creating repositories, and preparing special ex post facto reports.

The majority regards materials as useful in planning future projects, both in what to do again, as well as what not to do. But it is not clear that the majority has converted attitude to policy. Only five reported frequent use of the materials for research. Three institutions said the documents are never used for teaching purposes.

Nearly half the institutions said the documents are rarely or never used for research purposes.

On the positive side, 75 percent found the project documents useful for preparing public information and promotional items.

How about storage and retrieval of documents by the host countries? There the record is still worse. Institutional memory is sadly lacking. Twenty institutions did not know how project documents are handled in host countries.

Eight institutions felt the host-country practices were varied, ranging from good retention and extensive use to being simply filed or lost forever. Five admitted that documents are stored badly in poor locations.

Many said turnover in host countries is a major problem, making follow-through and continuity difficulty. They said this is as true in the AID field missions as it is in the host country entities.

Thanks to Dr. James Henson of Washington State, who has frequently been closely involved in the work of Title XII and BIFAD, I am aware of the exceptional, leadership of his home institution.

Washington State collects project materials, including those overseas, and compiles, records and submits these to the library achives. Documents are distilled into useful achieves, and they are available and are being used by faculty, students and others. Copies of all reports and documentation to an appropriate library in the host country. In several countries Washington State has been involved in the establishment of national agricultural libraries.

Washington State provides access not only to its own collection but that of other libraries and even other countries through its inter-library loan network.

I quote Dr. Henson: "Any faculty member on any project in which we are involved can request on a regular basis or make specific requests for information which will be duplicated and sent to that individual." A printed brohcure, "International Development Collection," guides those interested to the library's services.

Dr. Henson, I might add, is one of the few university officials who took the trouble to set on paper the university experience. Did the others let the matter drop when they hung up the phone?

At the most recent meeting of BIFADEC, I asked the senior AID official present to provide our board with a statement showing what standards, if any, AID imposes on the storage and retrieval of documents. At the next board meeting, I will attempt to get action on setting uniform policies.

Libraries and librarians link yesterday, today and tomorrow. Sadly, international development is severely handicapped because it does not have the full services of libraries and librarians. As William Paddock discovered, development seems to deal only with today--with the enrichment that comes from links to yesterday and tomorrow.

The people gathered in this room are unique. You are members of a relatively small group of people who can make an enormous difference in the speed and skill with which the United States conquers famine and malnutrition.

You can help provide leadership on the proper course to your university and to BIFADEC. More than any other group, you can enrich today's activities with the lessons of yesterday, and assure that the leaders of tomorrow's quest will benefit from the experiences of the past.

You are pioneers in the conquest of famine. Each of you holds a position of great responsibility--and opportunity. I look to you with high hopes.

If Abraham Lincoln were here, he likely would say, "Our cause is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. We, even we here, hold the power and bear the responsibility." Most people don't know how to conquer famine. You and I know. We know exactly how to proceed.

And Lincoln would add, "We will mean lose, or nobly save, the last best hope of earth."

In the few minutes since I began speaking, more than a thousand human beings--most of them young children--have died of famine. Every minute counts.